

Wendy Davis surges in Texas, Seattle moves to regulate ridesharing, and Rhode Island encourages nagging mothers – US state blog round up for 15 – 21 March

USApp Assistant Editor, **Natalie Allen**, and Managing Editor, **Chris Gilson** look at the week in U.S. state blogging. [Click here](#) for our weekly roundup of national blogs.

Northeast

With Tax Day rapidly approaching, taxes dominated the headlines in New York this past week. *Capitol Confidential* [writes](#) that Governor Andrew Cuomo is cracking down on those who owe the state back taxes, as he announced that the nearly 9,000 New Yorkers who owe the state more than \$10,000 would have their drivers' licenses suspended. *The Lonely Conservative* [looks at](#) another study that shows New Yorkers pay more in taxes than any other state and that red states have an average lower tax burden than blue states. Shifting gears, *The Lonely Conservative* also [reports](#) that the New York Dream Act, which would have provided financial aid to undocumented college students, failed by two votes.

Hit & Run Blog [explains](#) that while Massachusetts' successful 2006 healthcare law was the model for the Affordable Care Act, Obamacare has been an abject failure in the Bay State. The upgrades to the state's exchange have been plagued with technical issues, as it has failed to process anyone through the system electronically and is unlikely to be fixed before next fall.

In New Hampshire, *Granite Grok* [points out](#) that Senator Jeanne Shaheen has backed President Obama's position in 99 percent of votes thus far, writing that this makes her Washington DC's representative to New Hampshire rather than the other way around. *Political*

Carnival [compares](#) poll number for a potential race between Senator Shaheen and former Massachusetts Senator and recent New Hampshire resident Scott Brown; among registered voters 50 percent said they would re-elect Shaheen, while only 38 percent said they would vote for Brown.

United Liberty [reports](#) that Vermont's lawmakers are struggling to fund the state's single-payer healthcare system and may need to abandon the plan after new estimates that it will cost the state \$1.6-2.2 billion, which is near the amount that Vermont currently collects in taxes from all sources.

In Rhode Island, *Hit & Run Blog* [warns](#) young adults about a [state website](#) that teaches mothers how to find their children on social media, such as Snapchat, Tinder, and OkCupid, to remind them to sign up for healthcare through the state exchange.

PoliticsPA [writes](#) that Pennsylvania earned a D- in a new study that grades states on gender equality in the U.S. House. Since 1989, the Keystone State has only elected women to 10 out of 245 seats, at a rate of 4.1%



Protests to pass the Dream Act – Credit: DreamActivist (Creative Commons: BY-NC 2.0)

Pennsylvania ties with Arkansas for 35th out of the 50 states.

South

In Maryland, *Wonkblog* [postulates](#) that Maryland's plan to give extra time to enroll in the state's healthcare exchange for those who tried to register, but experienced technical difficulties, may be the first of many such extensions to take place across the country.

Blue Virginia [examines](#) a "firearms background check bill" that received unanimous bipartisan support in the Virginia General Assembly. Rather than mandating background checks on individuals wishing to purchase guns, the bill would pressure gun dealers to carry out background checks on guns they wish to purchase to insure they are not stolen property. Meanwhile, *United Liberty* [studies](#) that a new poll shows that Virginians dislike Governor Terry McAuliffe's plan for a Medicaid expansion when they learn that it is a key part of the Affordable Care Act.

In South Carolina, *Daily Kos* [looks at](#) State Representative Garry Smith's plan to cut funding to two public colleges for assigning books addressing gay and lesbian issues. Smith defended the measure saying that the college was promoting one side instead of fostering an academic debate. *The Hill* [writes](#) that the Keystone XL pipeline is a threat to South Carolina's tourism economy because using its carbon-laden fuel would accelerate global warming, and the resultant rising sea levels would devastate the state's coast.

PoliticusUSA [suggests](#) that Georgia could turn blue in 2014, as a new poll shows Jimmy Carter's grandson, Jason Carter, is now tied with incumbent Republican Governor Nathan Deal; changing demographics are largely responsible for the overall shift left in Georgia politics and Deal is particularly vulnerable while the FBI investigates an ethics scandal in the governor's administration.

In Florida, *The Shark Tank* [examines](#) former governor and current gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist's consistent track record of raising college tuitions fees after incumbent Governor Rick Scott's recent emphasis on keeping the costs of college low. *SaintPetersBlog* [reports](#) that the deaths of 477 children under the watch of the Florida Department of Children and Families has moved lawmakers to discuss an investing more money in the state's child welfare system.

In Kentucky, *Daily Kos* [scrutinizes](#) the role of government and the social safety net in the lives of citizens of the Bluegrass State in light of Paul Ryan's recent comments that LBJ's War on Poverty exacerbated the problem. Martin County in Kentucky was a focal point for President Johnson and it remains a deeply impoverished area.

Hit & Run Blog [writes](#) that a District Court Judge granted a preliminary injunction that would force Tennessee to recognize the marriages of three gay couples who were legally wed in other states pending a final decision on the lawsuit over the Volunteer State's same-sex marriage ban.

Left in Alabama [recommends](#) that Alabama State Senator Scott Beason and Talladega County Republican Party Chairman Danny Hubbard take some history classes after their recent comments that Senator Joseph McCarty was right about most of the people he accused and that he probably did not go far enough in searching for communists in the US government.

Talk Business Arkansas [reports](#) that there are currently two campaigns fighting to place medical marijuana on the ballot in 2014. While a similar ballot initiative failed by 3 points in 2012, advocates are confident that the measure will pass, which would make Arkansas the first southern state to pass some form of legalized marijuana.

In Louisiana, *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that former Governor Edwin Edwards, who served nearly a decade in prison on federal corruption charges and more recently starred in a reality TV show, is running for Congress for the vacant Baton Rouge-area seat.

Crooks and Liars [looks at](#) two postponed executions in Oklahoma as the Sooner State has been unable to obtain the drugs needed to carry out a lethal injection and is currently searching for alternatives.

PoliticusUSA [examines](#) Wendy Davis' recent surge in the Texas gubernatorial race as she cut Republican Greg Abbott's double-digit lead to 7 points, arguing that Davis is "waging a campaign on her terms" instead of running

as a “Republican lite” and she is starting to see the results. *PoliticusUSA* also [condemns](#) recent comments on the gender pay gap by Beth Cubriel, the Executive Director of the Texas Republican Party, who said that men get paid more because they are better negotiators and advised women to work on their negotiating skills instead of pursuing lawsuits for equal pay. Finally, *Burnt Orange Report* [writes](#) on the difficulties of finding a ride home after a night of drinking in Austin and looks at various measures to combat drunk driving in the city.

Midwest

In Illinois, *National Journal* [wonders](#) if Democratic Governor Pat Quinn’s luck is about to run out in his coming race against Republican candidate Bruce Rauner, after two elections won only by one percentage point.

Minnesota’s *MN Progressive Project* [looks](#) at a new bill in the state Senate that would prevent those convicted of domestic violence from owning firearms.

On Thursday, *Crooks & Liars* [writes](#) that the state of Michigan kept \$732 million in sales tax revenues away from Detroit between 2003 and 2013, effectively bankrupting the city.

In Wisconsin this week, *Caffeinated Politics* is [dismayed](#) at the lack of any meaningful action in the Madison legislature over a bill, which would require insurance plans overseen by the state to provide coverage for expensive chemotherapy drugs via pills rather than injections. They say that while the bill has support in the state senate, the Senate’s Republican leader, Scott Fitzgerald will not bring it to the floor, as a majority of the GOP does not support it. Still in the Badger state, *Crooks & Liars* [reports](#) that state Republicans have introduced a Senate bill that would declare that ‘issue ads’ cannot be considered to be candidate contributions. The bill is aimed at curtailing an ongoing investigation into Governor Scott Walker for illegal campaign activities. *Uppity Wisconsin* takes *Politifact Wisconsin* to task for their offering of ‘context’ on remarks from one of the state’s GOP Congressmen, Paul Ryan, that many men have a culture of not working.

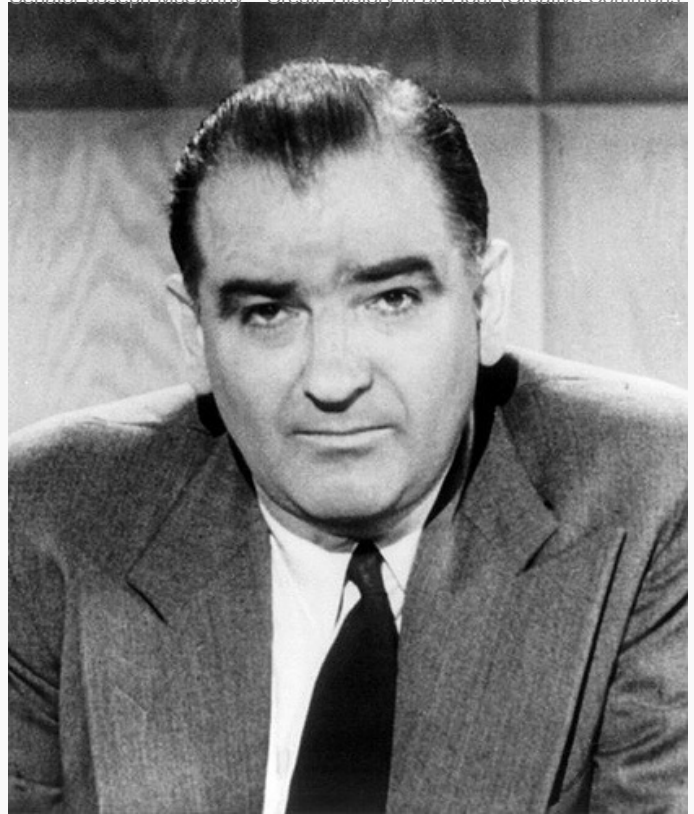
In North Dakota, *SayAnythingBlog* [reports](#) on Thursday that the state’s Democrats so far have zero legislative candidates in the Western (and oil rich) part of the state. Moving to South Dakota, *FreakOutNation* [reports](#) on comments from GOP state Senator Phil Jensen, that a recently nixed bill that would have allowed companies to discriminate against LGBT people would have also allowed Ku Klux Klan owned business to refuse service to African-Americans.

West and Pacific

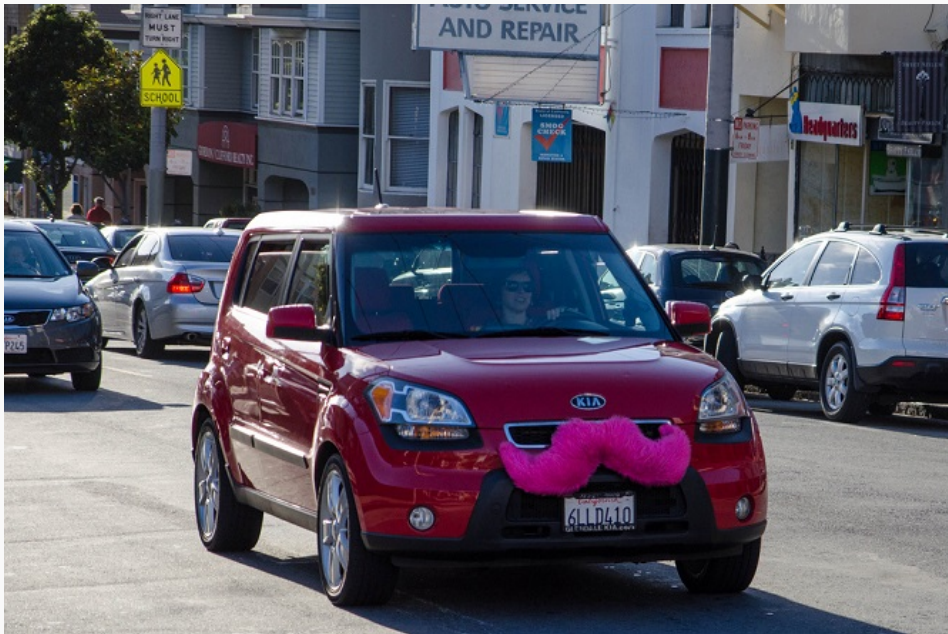
In Colorado, *Rothenblog* [downgrades](#) Democratic Senator Mark Udall’s re-election chances to “Leans Democrat” from “Democrat Favored” after the Republicans consolidated support around Representative Cory Gardner’s bid.

Crooks and Liars [examines](#) several Tea Party activists and far-right “constitutionalists” who have managed to get on the ballot in Democratic primaries this year. One of the candidates is currently the Republican vice-chairman for Sanders County, and two others are actually homeless.

In Idaho, *The Spokesman-Review* [reports](#) that the State Senate has passed a \$400,000 bill wolf-control bill. Those opposed to the bill say that it creates a new board to oversee wolf control will create confusion over which state agency is responsible for the problem, while proponents of the bill claim that it is a necessity.



BY 2.0)



Lyft drivers often affix a pink mustache to the front of their car – Credit: Raido Kaldma (Creative Commons: CC BY 2.0)

In Washington, *Wonkblog* [examines](#) Seattle’s new plans to regulate ridesharing apps that operate more like taxi-services than carpools. It argues that the new solution, which limits the numbers of drivers each app can have on the road at one time, is only the first of a wave of much needed regulation for apps like Sidecar, Lyft, and UberX, but will probably be much more nuanced in the future.

RedState [tells](#) the Beltway GOP to stay out of the Oregon Senate elections, where they have been supporting pro-choice Republican candidate Monica Wehby, arguing that her primary opponent Jason Conger is the Oregon GOP’s clear choice in their attempt to retake the Senate.

In California, *The American Interest* [looks](#) at San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed’s failed ballot initiative to fix California’s municipal pension problems, stating it is unlikely that Reed will be able to get the measure passed in 2016.

Calbuzz [argues](#) that the California GOP’s reboot strategy, which focuses resources on local, winnable elections, will not work because the Republicans real problem is their message and until it changes, it is unlikely that they will see more electoral success. *RedState* [writes](#) that Democrats may lose the Asian-American vote for supporting affirmative action in college admissions, arguing that Black and Asian voters only support the Democrats because they expect “goodies” and the Democrats haven’t delivered for Asian Americans.

Staying in California, *Crooks and Liars* [reports](#) that activists marched in Sacramento to protest Governor Jerry Brown’s support of fracking. *California Progress Report* [examines](#) a new bill that would guarantee workers paid sick leave as well as time off to care for a sick family member or bond with a new baby, judging it to be a “win-win” for the state. Meanwhile, *Capitol Alert* [writes](#) that Senator Dianne Feinstein has doubts about legalizing marijuana in California, primarily citing safety concerns and the belief that using marijuana leads to hard drug use.

And in Hawaii, *Crooks and Liars* reports that Blue America has endorsed Stanley Chang for the open House seat in Honolulu because he is “[quite literally a progressive dream candidate](#),” rather than a DINO (Democrat in Name Only).

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Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.

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